1994 when it was decided to constitute a Committee of the Sugar Ministers of five major sugar producing States (U.P., Maharashtra, Punjab, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu) under the Chairmanship of the Sugar Minister of Uttar Pradesh. This Committee submitted its report in April, 1995 recommending, *inter alia* constitution of a National Pricing Board for the purpose. The question of setting up of this Board was considered in the Conference of Sugar Ministers of all the sugar producing States held on 6.5.1995. It was decided in that Conference to obtain detailed views of all the sugar producing States before constitution of the proposed Board. All the State Governments were accordingly requested to furnish their views in this regard to this Ministry. Views of the Government of Maharashtra are awaited.

Complaint from twenty first century Medicare Limited, New Delhi against a Japanese Importer

2420. SHRI E. BALANANDAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received a letter dated 19th November, 1996 from an Hon'ble MP forwarding a complaint from Twenty First Century Medicare Ltd., New Delhi against a Japanese Importer of cut and polished Diamonds for indulging in cheating;

(b) whether the complainant has sought CBI investigation into the matter;

(c) whether Government are taking immediate steps to order investigation in cooperation with INTER-POL against the accused Japanese company so as to protect Indian Company's interests as well as our foreign exchange interest; and

(d) if so, the nature of action taken in the matter, with facts in details?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) Information is being collected from the concerned authorities and will be laid on the table of the House.

Liability of the Manufacturer after Warranty Period

2421. SHRI O.P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item captioned "Manufacturer's liability does not end after warranty period" appearing in the Times of India, dated 18th November, 1996;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) Few cases decided by Consumer Disputes Redressal Fora regarding complaints pertaining to defects in vehicles have been cited in the article. The Fora had drawn a distinction between manufacturing defects and problems arising out of negligence on the part of the consumer. Only in the former case the courts awarded relief to the consumer.

(c) The warranty is already covered under the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 and consumer can seek redressal under the provisions of section 2(1)(f) for any defect and section 2(1)(g) for deficiency in the product and services.

Data Bank for PF Subscribers

2422. SHRI S. MUTHU MANI: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation is creating a data bank of all PF subscribers in the country;

(b) the total number of persons to whom the pensions have been disbursed as on date;

(c) whether in several cases the PF authorities could not make the payment of pension to its subscribers even after the subscribers' attaining the prescribed age of 58 years; and

(d) if so, the action taken by Government to see that pension is disbursed to those subscribers who have attained the age limit of 58 years?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) 96,322 (As on 29.11.96).

(c) and (d) According to the EPF Organisation, no case about non-payment of pension to subscribers, who are entitled to pension under the Scheme on attaining the age of 58 years, has been reported.

Non-Plan loan for disbursement of salaries etc. to the employees of TAFCO

2423. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the amount of non-plan loan for disbursement of salaries, wages and bonus granted in the past five years for the employees of TAFCO;

(b) the amount of interest along with its rate charged on this account in the books of the company;

(c) whether Government have considered to expand equity base of the company though the company assets are substantially of higher value;

(d) whether Government would take immediate steps to protect the company and allow it to perform well according to commercially acceptable principles; and

(e) if so, the facts and details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) A total amount of Rs. 3,013.15 lakhs was released to TAFCO as non-plan loan during the past five years (from 1991-92 to 1995-96) for disbursement of salaries, wages, bonus etc. to the employees as well as other urgent requirements.

(b) The non-plan funds released carried interest at the prevalent rate ranging from 18 to 19.5% p.a. with a provision of additional 2.75% as penal interest in case of default in timely repayment of the instalments,

(c) to (e) Various options for revival of the company were considered during the past few years. The company was referred to BIFR during February, 1992 and after considering various possibilities for its revival, BIFR came to the conclusion that the company was not likely to become viable in future and it was just and equitable to wind-up the company. BIFR's final recommendations are now pending before the Allahabad High Court.

Infrequent publication of SIA Newsletter and Statistics

2424. SHRI JAGIR SINGH DARD: DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR:

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the SIA Newsletter and SIA Statistics being published has now become irregular and infrequent;

(b) if so, the steps being taken to see that the issues come out regularly;

(c) whether such issues will be sent to Members of Parliament who are interested in this; and

(d) whether more steps will be taken to keep the statistical updates informed to the concerned forums?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (d) SIA Newsletter/SIA Statistics is published every month and copies are sent to Parliament Library regularly. The SIA newsletter is brought out after receiving data from the RBI.

The Newsletter is supplied on written request and names of such persons/organisation is included in the mailing list.